

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 05629 211250Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2298
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION NATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5629

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PO
SUBJ: PASSAGE OF AGRARIAN REFORM LAW LIKELY, BUT
A CLOSE CALL

SUMMARY: THE ASSEMBLY PUT OFF UNTIL JULY 21 THE VOTE
ON THE GOVERNMENT'S AGRARIAN REFORM LAW. WHILE THE PSD
IS KEEPING ITS OWN COUNSEL, A PSD INSIDER SAID THE PARTY
WAS PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT MEASURE. END SUMMARY.

1. VOTE DELAYED: THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON JULY 20 HELD ITS
THIRD DAY OF DEBATE ON THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW, AND
DECIDED TO PUT OFF A VOTE UNTIL JULY 21. THE NATIONAL
DEBATE ON AGRARIAN REFORM, IN AND OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY,
HAD THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS:
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-- SOARES WARNS PCP: MARIO SOARES WARNED AT A JULY 19
SOCIALIST PARTY RALLY THAT THE PCP SHOULD NOT "PLAY WITH
FIRE" AND THINK THAT IT COULD RETURN TO THE DANGEROUS
SITUATION OF 1975. SOARES SAID THAT PS DISSIDENT LOPES
CARDOSO HAD MADE HIMSELF AN INDEPENDENT BY ATTACKING THE
AGRARIAN REFORM LEGISLATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
-- REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL REMAINS NEUTRAL: REVOLUTIONARY

COUNCIL SPOKESMAN SOUSA CASTRO SAID JULY 20 THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WOULD NOT ENTER INTO THE AGRARIAN REFORM DEBATE. THE COUNCIL EXPRESSED ITS SATISFACTION THAT THE PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSION WAS DEMONSTRATING DEMOCRACY IN ACTION.

-- GAMA HITS THE COMMUNISTS: IN THE ASSEMBLY DEBATE JULY 20 PS DEPUTY JAIME GAMA VIOLENTLY ATTACKED THE COMMUNISTS FOR USING AGRARIAN REFORM AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE POWER. HE SAID THAT THE PCP'S PROMISE TO MAKE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW DIFFICULT ONLY DEMONSTRATED THE FAILURE OF THE COMMUNISTS TO ADAPT TO A DEMOCRATIC REGIME.

-- AMARO DA COSTA ISSUES WARNING: CDS VICE PRESIDENT AMARO DA COSTA TOLD THE ASSEMBLY THAT THE CDS WOULD VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL IF THE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY THE CDS WERE NOT ACCEPTED.

2. PSD STAYS CLOSEMOUTHED: THE PSD NATIONAL COMMITTEE ISSUED A STATEMENT LATE JULY 20 ENTRUSTING THE FINAL DECISION ON THE PARTY'S VOTE TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE AND THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP BUT RECOMMENDING "NONIDENTIFICATION" WITH THE LAW UNLESS THE TEXT WAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY. THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE DECIDED TO ENTRUST THE FINAL DECISION TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE/PARLIAMENTARY GROUP IN ORDER TO GUARD AGAINST PS RETREATS FROM COMMITMENTS TO THE PSD, AND ITS STATEMENT WAS CAST IN NEGATIVE LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO WRING LAST-CONFIDENTIAL

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MINUTE CONCESSIONS FROM THE PS. A PSD INSIDER PRESENT AT THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING AND AT THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING EARLY THAT DAY TOLD EMBOFF THAT PARTICIPANTS IN BOTH MEETINGS HAD BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY FAVORABLE TO THE LAW. PARTY LEADERS DISCUSSED THE RESULTS OF WORKING GROUP NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PS ON AGRARIAN REFORM, THE ECONOMY AND POLITICAL TOPICS. SA CARNEIRO DID NOT SPEAK FOR OR AGAINST, ALTHOUGH HE OPPOSES PSD APPROVAL.

3. COMMENT: THE ODDS ARE STILL CLOSE BUT ON BALANCE IT LOOKS LIKE THE SOCIALISTS WILL EKE OUT A VICTORY. CARLUCCI

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